

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BANJUL

USMISSION USNATO

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRESS BRIEFING MAY 10, 1978

FOLLOWING IS AN UNOFFICIAL, UNCORRECTED EXCERPT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRESS BRIEFING. IF NECESSARY OFFICIAL VERSION WILL FOLLOW.

Q. WHAT, IF ANYTHING, ARE WE DOING TO GET THE TALKS ON NAMIBIA STARTED AGAIN?

A. WE ARE IN A HOLDING PATTERN AT THIS POINT. SWAPO, AS YOU KNOW, WENT BACK FOLLOWING THE SOUTH AFRICAN RAID. THEY HAVE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT THEY WANT THOSE TALKS CONTINUED. I MEAN, THE OUTSTANDING PARTY AT THIS POINT IS SWAPO.

Q. CAN YOU CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OR INACCURACY OF A STORY THAT WAS GIVEN VERY PROMINENT DISPLAY YESTERDAY IN THE JOHANNESBURG STAR THAT QUOTES SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE AS HAVING INFORMED THE FOUR LEADERS OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT IN RHODESIA THAT THE UNITED STATES -- I BELIEVE I'M QUOTING THIS ACCURATELY -- WOULD NOT SIGN OR WOULD NOT BE A PART TO ANY AGREEMENT WITH RHODESIA THAT DID NOT HAVE THE EXPLICIT APPROVAL OF NIGERIA?

A. I AM ALMOST CERTAIN HE DID NOT SAY ANYTHING OF THE SORT.

Q. MR. GRAHAM OF THE BRITISH FOREIGN OFFICE AND AMBASSA-
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DOR STEPHEN LOW -- CAN YOU BRING US UP TO DATE ON THEIR ACTIVITIES?

A. YES. THEY DO PLAN TO GO BACK TO SALISBURY. THE DATE IS NOT FIRM. IT WILL BE, HOWEVER, I'M PRETTY SURE, AFTER PRESIDENT KAUNDA COMES HERE TO THE UNITED STATES. THAT DATE IS NEXT WEEK, MAY 17. I THINK AFTER THAT MESSR. GRAHAM AND LOW WILL BE GOING TOGETHER TO SALISBURY.

Q. APROPOS, APART FROM THE FACT THAT THE UNITED STATES IS STILL PUSHING THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PLAN, IF THERE WERE FREE ELECTIONS IN RHODESIA AND IF A BLACK MAJORITY GOVERNMENT DID COME TO POWER BY THE END OF THE YEAR AND SMITH STEPPED DOWN, WOULD THE UNITED STATES THEN RECOGNIZE AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE? AND HAS VANCE INDICATED TO ANYBODY, REPORTERS OR RHODESIANS, THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD?

A. NO, I DON'T BELIEVE SO. I THINK THAT THE REASON THAT QUESTION HAS NOT BEEN DEALT WITH IS THAT IT INVOLVES TOO MANY PROBLEMATICAL QUESTIONS THAT SIMPLY HAVE TO BE SEEN. AS WE SAID AT THE TIME OF THE AMNESTY PROPOSAL, FOR INSTANCE, WE HAVE TO SEE WHAT IS THE SITUATION. I WOULD

POINT OUT, HOWEVER, THAT AS A GENERALIZED STATEMENT, AMONG THE KEY ELEMENTS THAT WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT IN TRYING TO BRING ABOUT A RESOLUTION OF THE RHODESIAN QUESTION IS THAT THE TRANSITION TAKE PLACE IN SUCH A WAY THAT WHAT RESULTS WILL BE AN INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED SOLUTION -- I.E., ONE WHICH WILL HAVE THE SUPPORT OF A MAJORITY OF ALL STATES AND WILL BE SEEN TO HAVE BEEN FAIR AND EQUITABLE AND IN WHICH EVERYONE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE. SO I CAN'T JUDGE SOMETHING THAT HASN'T HAPPENED.

Q. YOU ARE SAYING, HODDING, THE PRESENT POSITION REMAINS THAT IF THE CURRENT SCHEME FOR TRANSITION TO BLACK MAJORITY-RULE IN RHODESIA IS CARRIED OUT AS PLANNED, THAT'S STILL NOT SUFFICIENT?

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A. I AM SAYING THAT I HAVE NO WAY TO JUDGE WHAT IMPLEMENTATION WOULD BE, AND IT IS NOT A QUESTION WHICH I AM ABLE TO SPECULATE ON AT ALL.

Q. HODDING, HAS THIS GOVERNMENT TAKEN A POSITION ON THE FIRING OF A HIGH-RANKING BLACK OFFICIAL IN RHODESIA AFTER ONLY TWO WEEKS ON THE JOB THAT LED TO SOME DISAFFECTION ON THE PART OF BISHOP MUZOREWA?

A. I THINK THAT WE HAVE EXPRESSED SOME CONCERN ABOUT THAT. IT IS OBVIOUSLY A MATTER OF CONCERN TO SOME MEMBERS OF THAT INTERNAL GROUP, BUT I DON'T HAVE A READOUT AS SUCH ON IT.

Q. I THINK IT WAS ON THE 4TH OF MAY THAT DR. OWEN TOLD THE COMMONS THAT GIVEN A CERTAIN SET OF CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH HE SPELLED OUT THAT HE COULD FORESEE -- I THINK WAS HIS PHRASE -- BRITISH RECOGNITION OF AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE.

A. I AM SAYING I CAN'T DEAL WITH THAT, I AM NOT THE FOREIGN MINISTER.

Q. BUT THE QUESTION NOW IS, IS IT A FAIR INFERENCE TO DRAW THAT YOU ARE GOING TO WAIT UNTIL BRITAIN ACTS?

A. LET ME SAY, IN ANY CASE, WE HAVE ALWAYS RECOGNIZED THAT WHILE WE ARE AT BRITAIN'S REQUEST, ACTING WITH THEM IN THIS AREA, THE PRIME RESPONSIBILITY AS A FORMER COLONIAL POWER, AND LEGALLY THE CURRENT COLONIAL POWER IN RHODESIA, GREAT BRITAIN IS THE ONE DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE UNDER LAW FOR OVERSEEING A TRANSITION FROM THE OLD COLONIAL POWER TO A NEW ONE. UNCLASSIFIED

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NIAL STATUS TO A NEW INDEPENDENT STATUS. AND OBVIOUSLY
THEIR CONCERNS AND THEIR POSITIONS ARE OF FUNDAMENTAL
IMPORTANCE TO US.

Q. ON A RELATED QUESTION, THERE WAS ANOTHER FLURRY
OF REPORTS ABOUT MORE CUBANS GOING INTO MOZAMBIQUE TO
ADVISE MUGABE'S PEOPLE. DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY OF THE
CUBANS WHO ARE IN MOZAMBIQUE, ABOUT 800, ARE ACTUALLY
WORKING FOR THE RHODESIAN GOVERNMENT?

A. NO, I DON'T. I WILL SEE IF I CAN GET YOU SOMETHING
ON THAT.

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